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SPEECH OF GEORGE SENNOTT,

On the trial of Gordons, in Boston, for Treason.

THE BEAUTIES OF PURITANIC ABOLITIONISM.

Withering Denunciations of Power-Proud Aristocrats.

The trial of the Gordons, in Boston, on a charge of treason, has produced a remarkably bold and earnest speech from George Sennott, a lawyer of that city, who will be especially remembered as the volunteer counsel of John Brown.

The Gordon family consisted of the father and four sons, silversmiths by trade, who were induced to attend a private meeting, over which one Deacon Palmer presided. The meeting was held in the cellar of this Palmer, and the charge of treason made against the Gordons by Mr. Washburn, Mr. Hobart, Mr. Hayes, a member of Kallloch's church, and some other rampant "loyalists." Mr. Hobart, in this cellar inquisition, asked one of the Gordons if he would hang out the flag, to which he replied angrily that he would not, under coercion, do any such thing, whereupon the inquisitors lodged an information for the District Attorney, fortified by their oaths, that the Gordons were traitors. They were remanded to Fort Warren, and finally granted a trial (a sublime condescension,) but before the suit was fairly commenced, a *nolle prosequi* was entered by the U. S. District Attorney, and the case dismissed. This, Mr. Sennott, the Gordons' counsel, would not permit, the Court granting him leave to make his defense, which we present here below. How much the whole affair looks and sounds like similar affairs under old tyrannies and dynasties, we leave our readers to judge. We hope no single person will pass it by unread.

After stating the case as above, Mr. Sennott said:

The assistant District Attorney was then informed that the Gordons had given aid and comfort to the enemy. This information he says upon his oath that he believes. In consequence they were arrested. Their whole life and conversation for a year has been sifted and pried into. Their friends and neighbors have been summoned to testify about them, and on the testimony so obtained we are to hold them if it offers *probable cause*. Now, does it?

PEEPS AT LIBERTY THROUGH PIN HOLES.

And here, how simple and how easy is the task of the *mere* lawyer—of the *mere* commissioner! But if I regarded such a case as this is, or if you did, with the eyes of a mere lawyer, I should despise myself, and, sir, I would be astonished at you. What would be the use, sir, of a liberal education outside of our profession, as well as a severe training in it—what the benefit of active exertion in the political affairs of our country, beginning for each of us long before he could vote—what the value of the continued exercise of every manly and more than kingly prerogative which dignifies our existence as citizens of this imperial republic—if we should merely peep through the pin holes of evidence at a case which involves in its principles the LIBERTY of us all! I shall take leave, sir, not to do so. And while I shall take care not to present an un-lawyerlike view, or to say anything at all inconsistent with a legal analysis of the charge; while I shall even use the testimony faithfully, as the stimulus of reflection and the occasion of argument, I shall leave the law part where it should be left, in this stage of the case—to wit, in a subordinate relation—and speak of it briefly, and in the conclusion of the matter.

FINDING FAULT WITH THE GOVERNMENT.

Viewing the testimony, then, does it show any offence committed except by the conspirators—the spies—the informers—the cellar inquisition, who have borne false witness against their neighbors to destroy him? Suppose them to have acted against their nature, and to have told the truth under oath. Then the Gordons, in various ways, have found fault with the Government. That is the essence, the spirit, and even the scope of the testimony. Is that *treason*? Is it *treason here*? This was the home of free speech—and all the colors of republicanism, from black to billious, declared that speech should be

character, is simply to say that eaves dropping and tale bearing are not low and mean occupations. Under its influence nothing is known of a man's real character or disposition. Habitual watchfulness on one side, awakens habitual hypocrisy on the other. And it is only when the little saint of Boston expands into the gigantic villain of New Orleans, or San Francisco, that you can tell how vast a benefit you derived from his emigration! The wickedness looked little here, because we saw but little of it. The enormous pressure of universal listening and peeping had driven it deep in the innermost fibres of our society. So pressed, it produces smelling committees—it elects Hiss Legislatures. It brings such men as Deacon Palmer to associate, out of fear, with men like Mr. Washburn, whom they receive into their cellars and dismiss through back doors. Nobody will deny the fact, or its application here, who is not prepared to deny the existence of the Rev. Mr. Kalloch, or his church member, Mr. Hayes, who peeped after him, and black mailed him, and then exposed him. It is Mr. Hayes' turn to-day, it may be Mr. Kalloch's turn to do that dirty work for Mr. Hayes to-morrow. It is Mr. Washburn's turn now. It may be the Gordons' turn by and by. But be the turn whose it may, the system of a barbarous age and people, applied to the control of civilized mankind, awakens the fiercest resentment. Men have put up with the savagest task-masters. They have endured the bloodiest tyrants without resistance for many years. They have submitted to the King of Prussia—to the Czars—to the House of Austria—and even to the Turks. But a Government of meddling philanthropists they cannot bear. It resembles the Government of vermin more than any human despotism. Individually vile and odious, but quite insignificant, when collected, they are all-pervading, all-devouring, appalling, loathsome to every sense, and intolerable to the strongest body, and firmest mind! Thus the Government of the Robespierres, the Marats, the Washburns, the Hobarts and the Hayes, is the oppression which maketh the wise man mad! It made the Gordons mad when it was first applied to them, and what they uttered under its influence was temper—not treason.

WHICH WOULD A MAN PREFER?

Yet there was a sense as well as temper—if they preferred Jeff. Davis to an abolition Government. As I understand an abolition Government, a man *might* endure it. A man might endure the Government of Mr. Phillips, for he is a gentlemen—or of Mr. Garrison,

for, whatever may have been thought of his sanity, his integrity was never questioned; but the abolition Government which they understood was the inquisitorial—the cellar—the *sink and cess-pool* committee which stood before them, ordering them to put out a flag—and I think there is no man of spirit with that in his mind who would not prefer the wolfishness of a Davis to the pediculousness of a Washburn!

The Gordons have done no wrong. They do not hate their native country, though they cannot like its imbecile Government. A Government which has everything given to it by a generous people, and which does nothing but waste time, make proclamations and feed contractors, cannot be liked or trusted until it alters its course. It must continue suspected and unpopular, if it is, with every advantage and opportunity, unable to secure peace or make war! These sentiments I understand them to express. They have a right, moral as well as legal, to express such sentiments. They *ought* to express them; and wo to the fanatic who shall meddle with them, or with any one else in this way hereafter.

[The commissioner then delivered his opinion. He said there was no case proven, and dismissed the complaint. The crowd in the court-room burst into applause which nobody checked, and many persons went up and shook hands with the Gordons.]

WEEKLY STATE SENTINEL.

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED EVERY MONDAY AT THE

NEW SENTINEL OFFICE,

NO. 2 SOUTH MERIDIAN STREET,

OPPOSITE THE POSTOFFICE.

ELDER, HARKNESS & BINGHAM

Proprietors.

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